#12

No 92.

An Inaugural Thesis

On

Simulated Diseases

Ficto pectore fatur. Virgil.

By Abraham L. Cox. Penn^a.

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Passed March 22^d 1823

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An Inaugural Thesis on Simulated Diseases.

The term Simulated Disease includes, not only those cases where disease is merely feigned, but those also, where it is counterfeited or provoked by art, for the purpose of obtaining a dispensation from employment, as in armies, or a refuge from the consequences of idleness, as in hospitals and other publick institutions.

The severity of military discipline has been a fruitful source of counterfeited and feigned diseases; and the French Conscription in particular, occurring among a people of remarkable ingenuity; gave rise to many surprising instances of skill, in counterfeiting almost every variety of disease to which the human frame is subject. The artifice of feigning disease

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seems divested of criminality, when resorted to in order to avoid the dreadful necessity of abandoning home and the tender ties of relationship, to encounter a war of ambition, without any other motive than the command of tyranny, and to gratify the lust of avarice and power. But where it occurs in hospitals, it deserves severity of treatment, and justice to a benevolent publick, demands continued scrutiny and care, that the interests of the community be not sacrificed to the convenience of idle and worthless individuals.

The simulation of disease has been practised in all ages, and the names of many illustrious men are recorded in history, who for different purposes have resorted to this artifice. Ulysses pretending to be insane, that he might not leave his beloved Penelope, by going to the Trojan war, yoked a horse and a bull together, and ploughed the sea-shore, where he sowed salt instead of corn. Palamedes, by placing Telemachus the infant son of Ulysses before the plough of his father, discovered the dissimulation, and

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convinced the world that he was not mad; as he turned the plough from the furrow, not to hurt his child.

To avenge the murder of his father and brother, L. Junius feigned idiocy, whence he received the surname of Brutus. His behaviour at the death of Lucretia however, sufficiently proves that he was possessed of discretion and courage; and that his apparent stupidity was only assumed.

History records many other familiar instances. In the following verses a Roman is alluded to, who to imitate the great men of his City, feigned the gout, until he was actually attacked by it.

Tantum cura potest, et ars doloris,
Desiit fingere, Cælius podagram.

Martial.

In hospitals, it is not unusual on the approach of spring, to find many cases of a chronic nature, as rheumatisms and coughs, which during the winter could not be remedied by the skill of the ablest practitioners, suddenly and almost miraculously cured. These cases however obscure during the

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winter, are then easily understood; and it is notori-
-ous, that one fine day in spring, will occasion the
discharge of more patients, than all the medical
attentions they receive during a whole winter.

Amaurosis is mentioned by several authorities
as having been frequently feigned. It is easy
for a patient to pretend that the sight of one eye
is lost, but not always so easy for the surgeon to de-
tect the imposture. Mendicants it is said had
been long in the habit of using belladonna to
dilate the pupil, before it was used by surgeons
for the same purpose. But this ingenious deception
may be easily detected, by waiting a sufficient
time until the effects of the narcotic subside, which
will seldom require more than five or six hours.
If a patient should declare that the sight of one eye
only is lost, and no change can be observed in the
appearance or colour of it, if the iris dilate and
contract on the access and removal of light, it will
not be uncharitable to suspect that patient of pre-
-tence. Sometimes this affection, when real, is at-
-tended with a remarkable prominence of the eyes

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[illegible]

[illegible] dread him in these words. [illegible] you have [illegible] that eunuchs [illegible] and [illegible]. Yet a eunuch [illegible] steel a curse. Among [illegible] medical sutures forceps &c. [illegible] before his [illegible] exercised them, to [illegible] of his virility. [illegible] could appear him [illegible] position demanded [illegible] and [illegible], that in future he would be [illegible].

A young man intended [illegible] to be con[illegible] appointed [illegible] consort [illegible] a accident [illegible] of the [illegible]. He w[illegible] increment and in[illegible] and his [illegible] turned. [illegible] doubt existed. [illegible] and [illegible] invited in [illegible]

on stripping him a tight bandage was found with the [illegible] [illegible] round the neck and a similar one round each arm. These were removed when the pulsation of [illegible] heart became natural, although [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

Another young man was detected in the same [illegible], actuated by similar motives. He was [illegible] [illegible] and it was not until he was stripped [illegible] [illegible] that a single hair [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] tight around the neck, explaining [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

Dr. [illegible] mentions the case of a soldier, who to obtain a discharge from military service, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the action of the heart and arteries at pleasure, without the employment of any external means. [illegible] [illegible] power he exerted whenever he was in sight of the officer [illegible] [illegible] of his [illegible]. On being closely watched however he was found when alone to [illegible] exactly [illegible] other men. The [illegible] in some portion of his face [illegible]. The [illegible] in

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He remained there eight weeks, and was afterwards removed to Philadelphia, during the whole of which time he continued to impress spectators with an idea of his insanity. He evinced an indifference towards those around him, pretended to be stupid and unconscious, when questions were proposed to him, and was constantly muttering to himself. His keeper and the officers who accompanied him to Philadelphia, were confident that his disease was [illegible] on his commitment at the prison in Philadelphia the keeper commanded the prisoners to strike him whenever they came near him, until he should regain his faculties. This measure had a very speedy effect; for the prisoners were so much amused with this employment, that our hero would have lost his life if he had not very suddenly acknowledged his disease feigned and implored the keeper's mercy.

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[illegible] feigned [illegible] and consequent [illegible] muscular action, apparently without any adequate cause. [illegible] he would [illegible] [illegible] made [illegible] [illegible] strength [illegible]. An evident difference was observed between his feigned, and real sleep. Whether he was unconscious of what passed around him, as he desired to appear, the following circumstances will show. The iris was sensitive to the presence of light, and the orbicularis palpebrarum would suddenly contract, and [illegible] upon the rapid approach of [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] was increased. The senses of taste and smell [illegible] [illegible] stimulants. He would suck and partly chew his food, showed

[illegible] his inclination, showed [illegible]

[illegible] visited by the garrison chaplain [illegible] him tried to harden, at he would not [illegible] himself in his contracted [illegible]. He day after, he sat up with his eyes open [illegible] his hands. His improvement was prevented by some convulsive motions or rigidity in an [illegible] to strike on the spectators. From this time he gradually improved. On account of the non-use of a continued course of opiates, he was transported from the sea Hospital to London, and was admitted into Guy's Hospital on the 15th of [illegible]

[illegible] would not speak [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] found. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] without apprehending the possibility of its becoming [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] requiring for its removal a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] operation.

Amaurosis it will be seen is a signal [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of which [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], in observing whether [illegible] other symptoms [illegible] the disease are present or not.

Amblyopia is not an unfrequent [illegible]) [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] applies to the purpose of [illegible]

[illegible] common is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] in the education of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Dr. Chapman